



PSSB Weekly Highlights

- The Richland County Public Safety Communications System Manager position has been re-posted on the Sidney Job Service site at this link: <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/sidney/>. Starting salary is \$64,000 plus benefits. The position is open until filled.
- NEPA approval for microwave installation at the Fox Creek site in Richland County was just received.
- The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application period has been extended from Sept. 9 to Sept. 16 due to Hurricane Irene.

City of Billings Awards Contract for P25 Land Mobile Radio System

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Cassidian Communications, an EADS North America company, announced on Aug. 8 that it has finalized a multi-year agreement with the City of Billings to provide a digital, trunked P25 Land Mobile Radio (LMR) system. Billings will be supplied with a turnkey radio communications solution for public safety, including hardware, software, system engineering, installation and maintenance through 2021. Additionally, Cassidian Communications will upgrade the City's current emergency 9-1-1 call processing solution to a next-generation NG9-1-1 Sentinel Patriot call processing solution.

The City of Billings is the largest city in Montana and serves as a trade and distribution center for a four-state area serving more than 300,000 people. The city is experiencing rapid growth and a strong economy. The new, digital trunked CORP25 network intends to improve spectral efficiency, increase user capacity and provide enhanced coverage to support the City's growth.

"Our agency was looking for solutions that would meet our present and future needs, as well as work seamlessly with our existing systems and equipment," said Christina Volek, Billings' City Administrator. "Cassidian Communications responded to our request for bids with the CORP25

radio system, and we look forward to working with them now and into the future."

CORP25 is a non-proprietary P25 open-design solution. To read more about the technology, visit: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2011/8/prweb8702418.htm>.

Cassidian's Billings Implementation Reviewed

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

With the recent announcement that Cassidian will be implementing a P25 800 MHz trunking solution for the City of Billings, Yellowstone County and a number of State of Montana partners are interested in deployment plans and potential interfaces into existing systems. Agencies have a number of questions on how the new system will impact regional/statewide planning, daily operations with neighboring agencies and coordination for large-scale incident response.

Led by Mike Linder, Yellowstone County Sheriff, a meeting was organized on Aug. 30 to discuss some of these issues. Public Safety Services Bureau, along with representation from the Department of Transportation and Montana Highway Patrol, attended. Cassidian representatives reviewed the technology being implemented and basic plans for the Billings system. Attendees had opportunities to ask questions regarding options for interfacing with the new trunked system, particularly with existing surrounding VHF conventional resources. It is particularly important that the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office and surrounding rural fire communications can interface with the City of Billings.

A number of long- and short-range options were discussed, including temporary or permanent patches, VHF repeaters integrated to 800 MHz trunk groups, and ISSI connections. The new Billings system includes an ISSI connection. PSSB will continue to monitor this cooperation and report on progress being made in the Billings region.

State Agency Radio Users Task Force Plan for Oct. Strategy Session

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the State Agency Radio Users Task Force met Tues., Aug. 23, in Helena. Scott Bradford, Acting Chair, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), gave a brief update on the Interoperability Montana (IM) dissolution and

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transition, reporting that the Executive Committee is continuing to make decisions on grant re-obligations. All 2007 and 2008 grants have been re-obligated. Progress is being made on 2009 grant re-obligations, and work will soon need to start on the FY2010 grant re-obligations. The Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) grant is also moving forward. The transition seems to be going as smoothly as possible; however, a lot of paperwork has been involved.

Julia Noland, PSSB, reported that she is working on submitting several narrowband re-licensing requests to the FCC on behalf of various state agencies and the City of Billings. She also said that additional microwave monitoring equipment has been delivered to Lewis and Clark County and installation will begin Sept. 1. In addition, she said that site walks on 17 PSIC-funded microwave projects have started, and she assisted with a few last week.

Agency updates were given, and plans were reaffirmed to hold a strategy session to identify priority issues and action plans at the group's Oct. meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tues., Sept. 20, at 3:00 pm in room 160 of the Mitchell Building, 125 N. Roberts, in Helena.

Montana Broadband Program Has New Website

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Want to test your internet connection speed or locate broadband providers in your area? Then visit

<http://www.broadband.mt.gov/>, the State of Montana's new broadband website. The Montana Broadband Program, which was transferred to the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) in July, launched its new website this week. The site will evolve over time to incorporate more functionality and to increase user interaction.

You can help the Montana broadband effort by going to the site today and participating in our speed test and trying out the interactive map. The Broadband Program relies on crowd sourcing to help generate its data. Visit it today!

As announced in the July 22 *Heard Across Montana (HAM)*, the Broadband Program was transferred to PSSB to better align the program's overall goals and objectives with other State information technology related programs.

Look for an article addressing how broadband technology is impacting public safety and homeland security in next week's HAM.



Who says lightning never strikes the same place twice? Tell that to Charlie Gilmore, Lewis & Clark County Radio System Administrator, who again had to visit the Stonewall Communications Site outside of Helena when the RX antenna was hit a second week in a row by lightning.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., Sept. 15: I-15/90 Corridor Consortium**
Butte • 10:00 am - noon
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Thurs., Sept. 15: "Enabling Interoperability" Workshop**
Montreal, Canada
Hyatt Regency Montreal, 1255 Jeanne-Mance St.
<http://groups.winnforum.org/p/cm/ld/fid=171>